JANUARY 2011 | VOLUME 12 | NUMBER 1

CINEPLEX MAGAZINE

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JAVIER BARDEM
KEVIN SPACEY
NATALIE PORTMAN

Blue Valentine's RYAN GOSLING on love, marriage AND SETTING THINGS ON FIRE

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THE ONLY WAY OUT IS DOWN

JAMES CAMERON UNIVERSAL PICTURES RELATIVITY MEDIA AND WAYFARE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT A GREAT WIGHT PRODUCTION RICHARD ROXBURGH RHYS WAKEFIELD ALICE PARKINSON DAN WYLLIE AND IOAN GRUFFUDD "SANCTUM" CASTING GREG APPS MUSIC BY DAVID HIRSCHFELDER EDITOR MARK WARNER PRODUCTION DESIGNER NICHOLAS McCALLUM DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JULES O'LOUGHLIN ACS LINE PRODUCER BRETT POPPLEWELL CO-PRODUCER AARON RYDER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAMES CAMERON BEN BROWNING MICHAEL MAHER PETER RAWLINSON RYAN KAVANAUGH PRODUCED BY ANDREW WIGHT WRITTEN BY JOHN GARVIN AND ANDREW WIGHT DIRECTED BY ALISTER GRIERSON

RELATIVITY WAYFARE

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FEBRUARY 2011

A NEW COMEDY FROM RON HOWARD

Vince Vaughn
Kevin James

THE DILEMMA

TWO BEST FRIENDS. NOTHING COULD COME BETWEEN THEM... OR COULD IT?

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPYGLASS ENTERTAINMENT A BRIAN GRAZER / WILD WEST PICTURE SHOW PRODUCTION VINCE VAUGHN KEVIN JAMES "THE DILEMMA" JENNIFER CONNELLY WINONA RYDER CHANNING TATUM AND QUEEN LATIFAH MUSIC BY HANS ZIMMER MUSIC SUPERVISOR ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS CASTING BY JANE JENKINS CSA JANET HIRSHENSON CSA COSTUME DESIGNER DANIEL ORLANDI ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS LOUISA VELIS KATHLEEN McGILL WILLIAM M. CONNOR EDITED BY MIKE HILL ACE DAN HANLEY ACE PRODUCTION DESIGNER DANIEL CLANCY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SALVATORE TOTINO ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TODD HALLOWELL VICTORIA VAUGHN KIM ROTH PRODUCED BY BRIAN GRAZER RON HOWARD VINCE VAUGHN

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JANUARY 14

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GREETINGS FROM ELLIS JACOB,

PRESIDENT AND CEO
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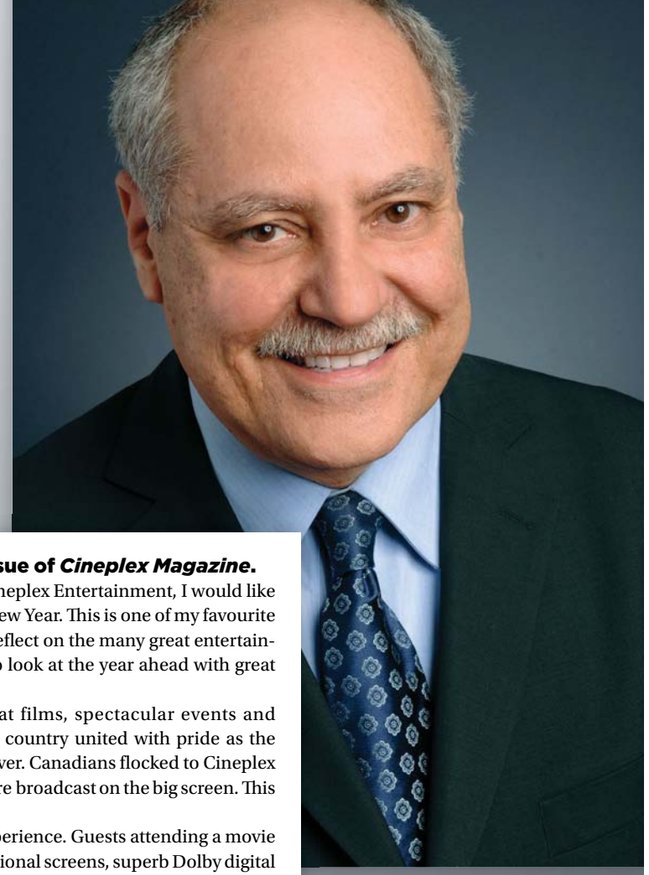

Thank you for picking up this issue of *Cineplex Magazine*. On behalf of all of my colleagues at Cineplex Entertainment, I would like to wish you a happy and prosperous New Year. This is one of my favourite times of the year as I get a chance to reflect on the many great entertainment experiences we offer and also to look at the year ahead with great anticipation for what is still to come.

The past year was filled with great films, spectacular events and milestone launches. In February, the country united with pride as the Winter Olympics were held in Vancouver. Canadians flocked to Cineplex theatres across the country as the entire 17 days of the Games were broadcast on the big screen. This was an Olympic first and one that we were very proud of.

In June we launched UltraAVX, our enhanced entertainment experience. Guests attending a movie in UltraAVX are treated to a screen larger, on average, than our traditional screens, superb Dolby digital surround sound, extra-wide high-back rocker seats and reserved seating. There are now 11 UltraAVX locations across Canada with others planned to open in 2011.

Toward the end of the year, we were very pleased to launch our new digital download service that enables you to watch movies from your home PC or XBox 360. The Cineplex Store at Cineplex.com now offers movie downloads in Download to Own and Video on Demand formats, featuring new-release and catalogue titles. This new service complements the DVD and Blu-ray products already available for purchase at the Cineplex Store. Many new features are planned for the download service in 2011, including the ability to stream High Definition content. We encourage you to visit Cineplex.com and check out the Cineplex Store.

We also launched the Cineplex Mobile App for BlackBerry, iPhone and other smartphones. With this app you can browse showtimes and theatres, check your SCENE point balance and even buy tickets — all from your smartphone.

In 2010, we were delighted to offer our guests a wide range of programming, including many great live events from The Met Opera, National Theatre and a variety of concerts. We'll continue these great events in 2011 and are pleased to have added a new three-part series from the LA Philharmonic. Visit Cineplex.com for details or to purchase tickets.

There are so many great films slated to be released in 2011. At Cineplex, we are committed to offering the best possible programming and also the best entertainment experience. We are continuously converting 35mm projection systems to the latest digital technology in order to provide the crispest imagery and sharpest picture onscreen. We are also adding more RealD 3D systems to complement the growing number of 3D releases.

From everyone at Cineplex Entertainment, thank you for allowing us to be a part of your entertainment experience. We look forward to welcoming you into our theatres again this year and wish you a safe and happy 2011.

ELLIS JACOB
PRESIDENT AND CEO
CINEPLEX ENTERTAINMENT

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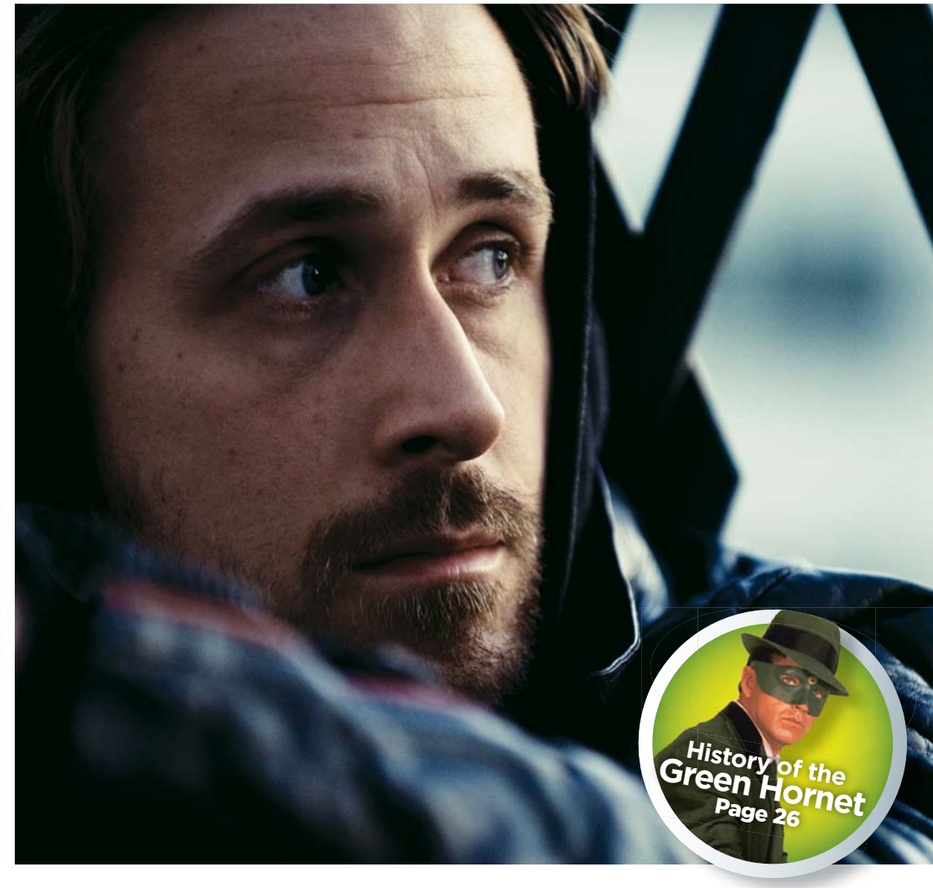

COVER PHOTO BY JEFF VESPA/CONTOUR

EDITOR'S **NOTE**

THE WAY **WE WERE**

Let's talk about your relationship. Better yet, let's talk about your last relationship, the one that ended suddenly…or dragged on until there was nothing left but a bloodless corpse. Where did it go wrong?

Don't pretend you haven't thought about this. Whether alone in bed, on the phone with a best friend, or maybe even in a therapist's office, I'm guessing you've spent at least a few hours reliving pivotal moments in that failed romance: a great conversation, an awkward first kiss, a stupid fight, a not-so stupid fight. Maybe analyzing is a better word.

Derek Cianfrance, who wrote and directed this month's wrenching breakup pic *Blue Valentine*, isn't the first to discover that the same backward-looking narrative is a good fit for breakup movies. His film intercuts the present, in which a young couple (**Ryan Gosling** and Michelle Williams) grapples with the end of their marriage, and the past, when they first met and fell in love.

The device has been used to similar effect in some of the very best breakup movies. Like *Annie Hall*. Woody Allen, the master of self-analysis, starts the film a year after Annie (Diane Keaton) and Alvy (Allen) were madly in love, then dives into 95 minutes of flashbacks, split screens and direct addresses to the audience that tear the couple's doomed romance apart like a Christmas turkey.

Or think of Michel Gondry's time-bending, mind-bending *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. A man (Jim Carrey) discovers his ex (Kate Winslet) has undergone a procedure to have all memories of him expunged from her brain and he decides to do the same…only to realize halfway through the procedure he's making a huge mistake. Now he has to hide those memories — reliving them as we go — in the far corners of his subconscious where the procedure can't find them.

More recently, *(500) Days of Summer* took the 500 days comprising a couple's (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Zooey Deschanel) finite romance, threw them up in the air like a game of 52 Pickup and then walked around the mess on the floor, analyzing a random day here, a random day there, in the hopes of figuring it all out.

The result is usually an anti-romance where, and I don't think I'm giving anything away here, the characters rarely wind up together in the end — and the film is all the better for it.

In "How to Act Like You're in Love," page 36, Gosling explains why shooting a movie that takes place in two time frames makes the prep work much more complicated — especially when you're a Method actor.

We get a different angle on relationships in *No Strings Attached*, one of several friends-with-benefits-themed films coming out this year. In "Funny Girl?," page 32, we put the film's star, **Natalie Portman**, in the spotlight, taking a look at the lighter turn her career is finally taking in 2011.

In "Talking Life and Death with **Javier Bardem**," page 28, the Spanish star talks about his wonderful life, and preparing for death in his melancholy drama *Biutiful*.

And "Doing Time with Jack Abramoff," page 22, is our interview with *Casino Jack* star **Kevin Spacey** and director **George Hickenlooper**. Sadly, Hickenlooper died this past October, less than two months after this interview, and just a couple of months before his film would open around the world.

■ **MARNI WEISZ**, EDITOR

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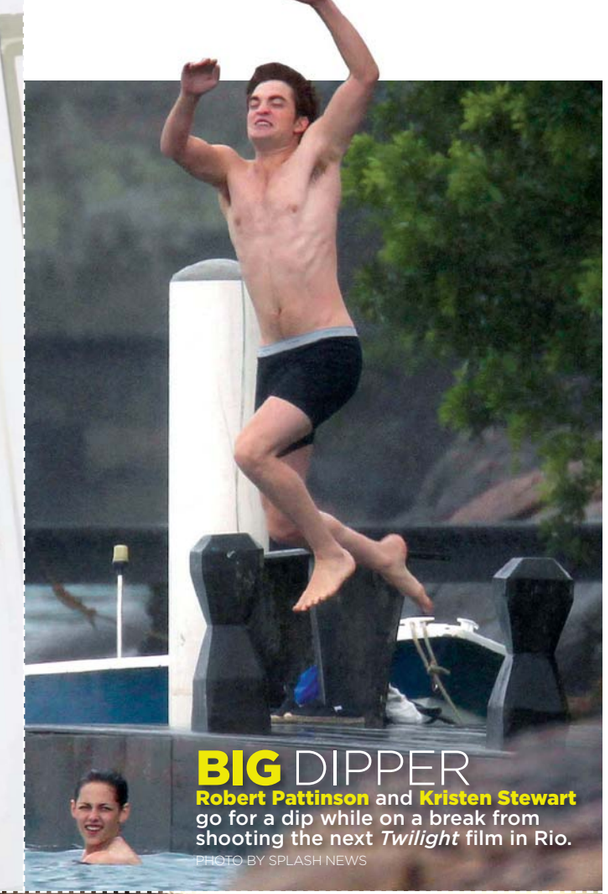
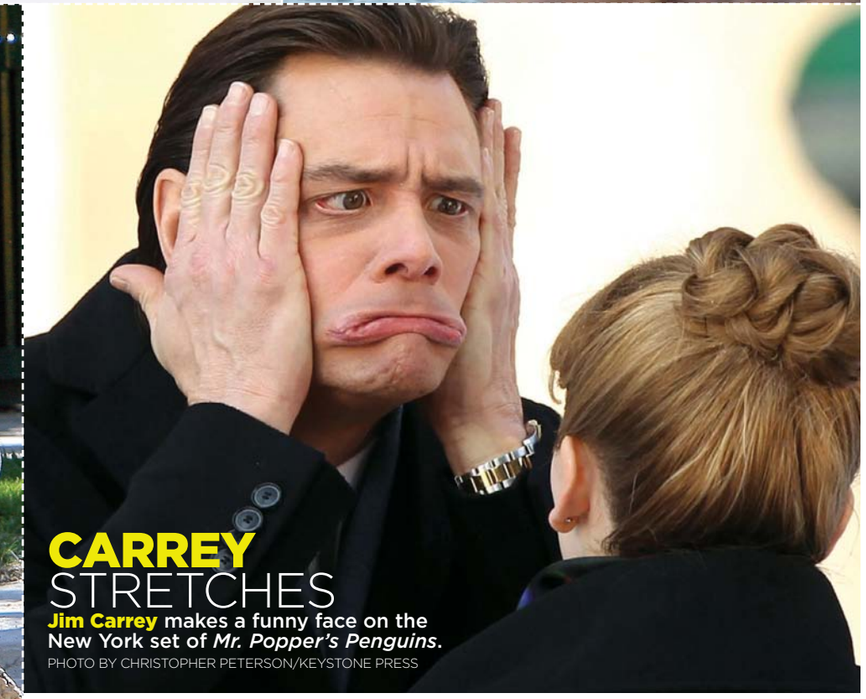
SIGNATURE STYLE
Johnny Depp signs an autograph at his Paris hotel.
PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS

ADAM?
Adam Sandler zip-lines aboard a Royal Caribbean Cruise ship while shooting a scene for *Jack and Jill*. Here he's Jill; he also plays her twin brother, Jack.
PHOTO BY KEYSTONE PRESS



BIG DIPPER
Robert Pattinson and **Kristen Stewart** go for a dip while on a break from shooting the next *Twilight* film in Rio.
PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS

SAY AWWWW
Jack Black sticks his tongue out at son Thomas at a Beverly Hills park.
PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS



CARREY STRETCHES
Jim Carrey makes a funny face on the New York set of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*.
PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER PETERSON/KEYSTONE PRESS

IN BRIEF

SOMETHING FISHY

If Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere* (above) seems to have a retro look, there's good reason. It was shot with her dad Francis Ford Coppola's old lenses from the 1983 pic *Rumble Fish* (inset).

"The lenses were in storage, and we had them all cleaned up and restored," says the younger Coppola. "These are Zeiss lenses, which have a softer quality; we're so used to super-sharp with hi-def, but with this I wanted to have a romantic feeling."

Coppola adds that, while she still uses film, her dad is really into HD. "He thinks it's sweet that my brother Roman [who produced *Somewhere*] and I are so sentimental and love film. It has a beautiful quality that is unique, and I hope that we can shoot on it for a little while longer." —*MW*

TOO COOL

Artists Antti Pedrozo and Michel de Kok carved this massive Transformers statue for the Ice Sculpture Festival of The Netherlands. Eventually, we're guessing, it transformed into a puddle. ▶

The Art Of Film

Boston graphic artist Brandon Schaefer has carved out a niche designing what he calls Alt. Movie Posters for film festivals, classic film screenings, art galleries, and sometimes just for fun. Clever and conceptual, the designs reflect the essence of each film, and are rendered in Schaefer's retro style. But what about copyright laws? When asked whether he's run into issues with the movie studios, Schaefer says simply, "I try not to step on any toes." Shown here, from left: *The Shining*, *Sleeper* and *The Life Aquatic*. You can see more of Schaefer's Alt. Movie Posters at www.seekandspeak.com.

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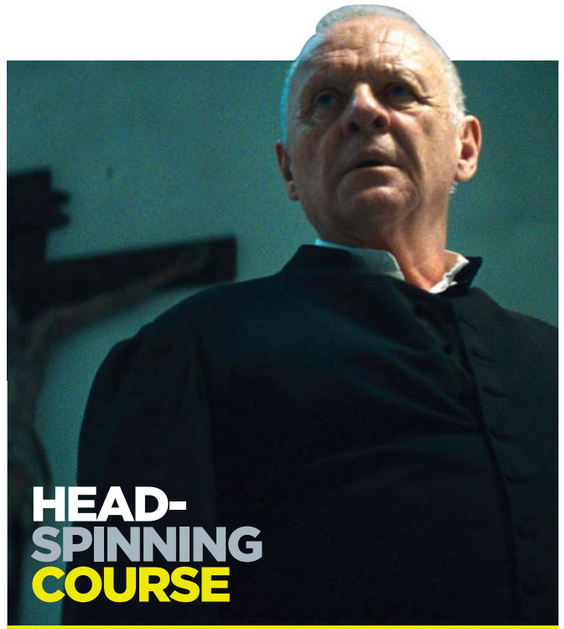
CORLEONE HOME FOR SALE

Make them an offer they can't refuse. The Staten Island, 1930s Tudor-style house used as the Corleone's home base in the *Godfather* movies is up for sale. The asking price? Close to $3-million (U.S.). Not only was the house used to film many of the movie's pivotal scenes — including Connie's wedding, which took advantage of the property's expansive grounds — it has also become an unofficial *Godfather* museum, housing autographs, pictures and even Marlon Brando's cue cards. The home's previous owner passed away late last year. —*MW*



HEAD-SPINNING COURSE

If you thought exorcisms were more Hollywood invention than holy ritual, think again.

This month's *The Rite* — which casts Anthony Hopkins (above) as an older priest who teaches a younger, non-believing padre (Colin O'Donoghue) the art of exorcism — is based on the book *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Day Exorcist* by American journalist Matt Baglio.

Baglio lived in Rome and was fascinated by the Vatican-sponsored course "Exorcism and the Prayer of Liberation." He took the course with an American priest, Father Gary Thomas, and then watched as Father Gary apprenticed under veteran exorcist Father Carmine, who performed the rite on dozens of people per day.

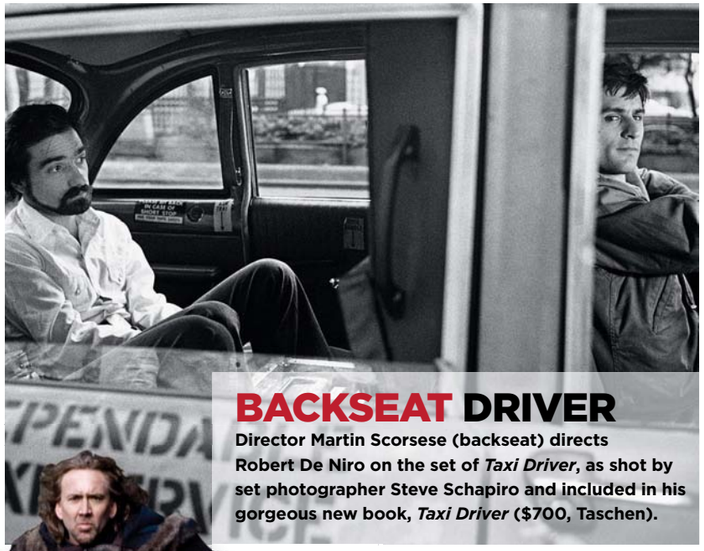
Bagio's experience showed him there is a need for the demon-dismissing rite. He told *Time* magazine, "Even exorcists themselves admit that 90% of the people that come to see them don't need an exorcism. There still remains a small percentage of cases, however, involving levitation, mind-reading and other paranormal phenomena that can't be explained through science." —*IR*

TRON COUTURE

We don't care that no character ever wore these sexy silver platforms in *TRON: Legacy*. We don't care that they look more like the Sydney Opera House than something you'd wear while playing a videogame. It's enough that designer Jerome C. Rousseau was inspired by Olivia Wilde's butt-kicking *TRON* warrior Quorra while creating this centrepiece for Disney's *TRON*-inspired couture collection of jewellery, shoes and accessories. We also don't care that the shoes are way out of our price range at $795 (U.S.), because we'd never be able to walk in them anyway. —*MW*

SUNDANCE IN THE BAG

The Sundance Film Festival blankets Park City, Utah, with movies, celebrities and giant banners from the 20th to 30th of this month. So many giant banners, in fact, that last year's Sundance banners have been recycled into a collection of sturdy totes, backpacks and script bags (seen left) that you can purchase ($50 to $90 U.S.) at www.sundance.org/store.



BACKSEAT DRIVER

Director Martin Scorsese (backseat) directs Robert De Niro on the set of *Taxi Driver*, as shot by set photographer Steve Schapiro and included in his gorgeous new book, *Taxi Driver* ($700, Taschen).

Barney's Version

CANADA'S TOP TEN

Congratulations to the films named Canada's Top Ten of 2010 by the Toronto International Film Festival Group. In alphabetical order, they are:

Les Amours imaginaires
(d: Xavier Dolan)
Barney's Version
(d: Richard Lewis)
Curling
(d: Denis Côté)
The High Cost of Living
(d: Deborah Chow)
Incendies
(d: Denis Villeneuve)
Last Train Home
(d: Lixin Fan)
MODRA
(d: Ingrid Veninger)
Splice
(d: Vincenzo Natali)
Trigger
(d: Bruce McDonald)
Trois temps après la mort d'Anna
(d: Catherine Martin)

Go to www.tiff.net/topten to find out about screenings at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto.

Quote Unquote

"THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND HORSE IS ANCIENT AND BEAUTIFUL. IT SEEMS TO BE THE MOST NATURAL THING IN THE WORLD. THAT CONNECTION TURNED OUT TO BE THE MOST REWARDING PART OF MY EXPERIENCE ON THIS MOVIE."

—**NICOLAS CAGE** ON LEARNING TO RIDE A HORSE FOR *SEASON OF THE WITCH*

THE SERIOUS SIDE OF MÉLISSA DÉSORMEAUX-POULIN

Incendies hits theatres January 20th

Any Québec teen can tell you who Mélissa Désormeaux-Poulin is. She starred in the very successful *À vos marques... Party!* franchise, about a high school swim team. She also starred in *Dédé à travers les brumes*, a bio-pic about the too-short life of singer Dédé Fortin from the band *Les Colocs*. But none of her teen fans would have predicted her next move.

This month, Désormeaux-Poulin plays the lead in *Incendies*, a devastating movie that takes place in two time periods — now, and during the Lebanese civil war of the 1970s. Helmed by Genie-winning director Denis Villeneuve (*Polytechnique*), this one is definitely for grown-ups. "It used to be the teenagers who brought their parents to see my films. This time it's clearly the other way around," says the 29-year-old actor, before quickly adding, "It's certainly not a movie for young teens. It's a powerful but hard-to-watch modern Greek tragedy."

Filled with rape, genocide and the far-reaching affects of terrorism, *Incendies* is based on the play *Scorched* by Lebanese-Canadian writer Wajdi Mouawad. It tells the story of two Canadian twins, Jeanne (Désormeaux-Poulin) and Simon (Maxim Gaudette), who, after their mother's death, return to her birthplace in Lebanon to discover the truth about their war-torn origins.

And, believe it or not, when Villeneuve first approached Désormeaux-Poulin for the project, he wanted to make this a silent film. "The play was very wordy," she says. "It was full of beautiful poetic monologues. Denis wanted to use poetic visuals instead." The final film does have dialogue, but much less than the play. "This was perfect for me. In real life, I'm someone who loves to listen. I'd rather listen than talk," says Désormeaux-Poulin. "All the silence in the movie felt so right."

Incendies has already opened in Quebec and travelled the world's major festivals, winning awards. "Sadly, because of my shooting schedule I was only able to attend the world premiere at the Venice Film Festival," says the actor.

But there's a chance she'll make one more trip on behalf of the film — to L.A. for the Oscars. *Incendies* has been chosen as Canada's entry in the Best Foreign Language Film category; nominations will be announced January 25th. "If the movie gets selected as one of the five finalists, attending the Oscars would be the culmination of all of our work, the ultimate dream for our team," she says. —*MATHIEU CHANTELOIS*

PHOTO BY JOCELYN MICHEL

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ALL DRESSED UP

FREIDA PINTO

Draped in aubergine at the premiere of *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger* in Goa, India.

PHOTO BY SAX ROHMER/SPLASH NEWS

SARAH JESSICA PARKER

A dress made to twirl at the Bambi Awards in Potsdam, Germany.

PHOTO BY FLORIAN G. SEEFRIED/GETTY

EMMA WATSON

Short hair, short dress at the London premiere of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part One*.

PHOTO BY ANNE-MARIE MICHEL/SPLASH NEWS

KRYSTEN RITTER

Sparkling at the L.A. wrap party for *BFF & Baby*.

PHOTO BY KEYSTONE PRESS

BRAD PITT

The Paris premiere of *Megamind* inspires leather pants.

PHOTO BY KEYSTONE PRESS

ANNE HATHAWAY

Wintery in white at a New York screening of *Love & Other Drugs*.

PHOTO BY RICHIE BUXO/SPLASH NEWS

IN THEATRES

JANUARY 7

SOMEWHERE

Stephen Dorff gets his career back on track thanks to pal director **Sofia Coppola**, who cast him as disillusioned movie star Johnny Marco. Johnny's meaningless life finds purpose when his 11-year-old daughter (**Elle Fanning**) comes to live with him in Los Angeles.

Country Strong's Gwyneth Paltrow

COUNTRY STRONG

Alcoholic country music star Kelly Canter (**Gwyneth Paltrow**) leaves rehab and embarks on a tour with her hubby manager (**Tim McGraw**), a honky-tonk singer (**Garrett Hedlund**) and a young beauty queen-turned-crooner (**Leighton Meester**), which may not be the best move for a recovering addict with self-esteem issues and dreams of a comeback. Paltrow, who sang in the movie *Duets* and an episode of *Glee* last year, once again proves she's no one-note wonder.

SEASON OF THE WITCH

Behman (**Nicolas Cage**), a crusading medieval knight, returns to Europe to find the countryside ravaged by the Black Plague. Church leaders believe a captured witch (**Claire Foy**) is to blame, and ask Behmen and his fellow knights to take her to a remote abbey where she will be rendered powerless.

Claire Foy

JANUARY 14

BIUTIFUL

Javier Bardem earned Best Actor honours at last year's Cannes Film Festival for his powerful performance as Uxbal, a dying man who supports his family in Barcelona by working as the muscle in an illegal sweatshop. **See Javier Bardem interview, page 28.**

THE GREEN HORNET

Seth Rogen lost 30 pounds to play DC comic book hero Britt Reid, the newspaper scion who becomes masked crime-fighter Green Hornet after his father's death. Reid is joined by sidekick Kato (**Jay Chou**), a chauffeur, weapons master and martial artist extraordinaire who seems to do all the heavy lifting. **See Green Hornet feature, page 26.**

Seth Rogen (left) and Jay Chou in *The Green Hornet*

BLUE VALENTINE

Actors **Ryan Gosling** and **Michelle Williams** threw themselves into their roles as a couple — they actually lived together for a month before shooting — desperately trying to save their marriage in director **Derek Cianfrance**'s candid look at a crumbling relationship. **See Ryan Gosling interview, page 36.**

THE DILEMMA

What would you do if you discovered your best friend's wife was cheating on him? That's the dilemma facing Ronny Valentine (**Vince Vaughn**), who doesn't know whether he should tell business partner and friend Isaac (**Kevin James**) that his wife (**Winona Ryder**) is playing around.

Ruth Sheen and Jim Broadbent in *Another Year*

ANOTHER YEAR

Tom (**Jim Broadbent**) and Gerri (**Ruth Sheen**), still in love after decades of marriage, are the envy of their friends, especially Mary (**Lesley Manville**) and Ken (**Peter Wight**), two lonely and depressed alcoholics who rely on the couple for emotional support. This is another slice-of-life pic from British director **Mike Leigh**, the man who treats a mundane moment as a thing of beauty.

CONTINUED ▶

JANUARY 21

THE WAY BACK

Filmed in Bulgaria, Morocco and India, director **Peter Weir**'s epic tale follows a group of prisoners who escape from a Siberian gulag in 1940 and walk 4,000 miles to freedom. Based on real-life events, the film's cast includes **Ed Harris**, **Colin Farrell** and **Jim Sturgess** as the prisoners, and **Saoirse Ronan** as an orphaned Polish teen who joins the escapees on their gruelling trek.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

The new trend in rom-coms is to focus on two people who start off looking for free-and-easy sex, but then one of them goes and falls in love with the other causing all kinds of problems. This time around it's **Ashton Kutcher** and **Natalie Portman** as the twosome who go from platonic friends to passionate lovers. **See Natalie Portman profile, page 32.**

No Strings Attached's Ashton Kutcher

THE ILLUSIONIST

The Triplets of Belleville director **Sylvain Chomet** returns with another dialogue-free animated film. This one concerns an aging vaudeville stage magician whose routine is wearing thin by the late 1950s. He travels to Scotland where he meets a young girl who believes his magic tricks are real, and they develop a lasting friendship.

The Illusionist

JANUARY 28

Kevin Spacey gets riled up in *Casino Jack*

CASINO JACK

Kevin Spacey's smarmy charm serves him well playing real-life disgraced Washington "superlobbyist" Jack Abramoff, who takes millions of dollars from American Indian tribes with the promise he can get the feds to greenlight their gaming enterprises. However, Jack's promises are not only overblown and unethical, they are illegal. Sadly, the film's director, **George Hickenlooper**, died just a couple of months ago. **See interview with Kevin Spacey and the late George Hickenlooper, page 22.**

THE RITE

Didn't **Anthony Hopkins** say a few years ago that he was retiring from acting? Well, the 73-year-old sure is busy with four films reportedly set to open this year. His first is this horror about a skeptical American priest (**Colin O'Donoghue**) who travels to Italy to learn the art of exorcism from an older padre (Hopkins). Based on a true story, believe it or not.

THE MECHANIC

Charles Bronson's 1972 shoot-'em-up is remade with **Jason Statham** starring as a top-notch hit man, who trains the son (**Ben Foster**) of his murdered boss (**Donald Sutherland**) to be his partner-in-crime and take revenge against those who killed daddy.

The Mechanic's Jason Statham

SPECIAL EVENTS ON THE BIG SCREEN

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA:
***LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST* (PUCCINI)**
LIVE: SAT., JAN. 8

***DON PASQUALE* (DONIZETTI)**
ENCORE: MON., JAN. 17

***DON CARLO* (VERDI)**
ENCORE: SAT., JAN. 22

L.A. PHILHARMONIC LIVE:
BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONY NO. 7
SUN., JAN. 9

CLASSIC FILM SERIES:
***A STAR IS BORN* (1954)**
WED., JAN. 12 & SUN., JAN. 23

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE:
FELA!
THURS., JAN. 13

ANIME SCREENING:
EVANGELION 2.0: YOU CAN (NOT) ADVANCE
THURS., JAN. 20

THE BOLSHOI BALLET:
GISELLE
SUN., JAN. 23

WWE-PAY-PER-VIEW:
ROYAL RUMBLE
SUN., JAN. 30

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CASINO JACK
HITS THEATRES
JANUARY 28TH

Kevin Spacey as Jack Abramoff in *Casino Jack*
INSET: Director George Hickenlooper

For what turned out to be his final movie, the late director George Hickenlooper arranged a series of prison meetings with Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff. Here, Hickenlooper and Kevin Spacey, who plays Abramoff in *Casino Jack*, talk about the man they met ■ BY MARNI WEISZ

DOING TIME WITH JACK ABRAMOFF

"**Did you see the picture? How did it go? People liked it? Be honest now.** Did people laugh in the screening and stuff?"

Director George Hickenlooper is understandably nervous about *Casino Jack*, a film that, despite being about one of the biggest political scandals in recent U.S. history, was shot in Toronto and Hamilton in 2009, produced by Canadians and written by a Canadian. Now Hickenlooper's back in town for the film's world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and when he hears I've just come from a press screening he's anxious to find out how the critics reacted, particularly if they laughed at all the right parts.

Sadly, he will never read most of their reviews. The 47-year-old director, whose resumé also includes *Factory Girl* and *Hearts of Darkness*, died suddenly from an accidental overdose of painkillers less than two months after this interview, and just two months before *Casino Jack* was scheduled to hit theatres across North America.

A political junkie (he was a Republican before becoming a Democrat during the Bush Jr. years), Hickenlooper was fascinated by the film's subject matter — the rise and fall of Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff (Kevin Spacey). The high-rolling influence peddler knew nearly every member of the Bush administration, but as soon as he was arrested in connection with defrauding American Indian tribes and corrupting public officials, everyone in Washington claimed they'd never heard of him.

It's complicated stuff, which the film tries to make palatable with a good dose of humour, much of it based on Abramoff's love of movies and habit of pulling out schlocky celebrity impressions (Sylvester Stallone, Ronald Reagan) at inopportune times. Abramoff even tried his hand at the movie biz in the late 1980s and early 1990s, producing the Dolph Lundgren action pic *Red Scorpion* and its sequel, *Red Scorpion 2*.

Even though Abramoff wasn't happy this film was being made, Hickenlooper managed to arrange a series of five meetings with him at the medium-security Federal Correctional Institute in Cumberland, Maryland, one of which Spacey attended. "I think he was a little star struck that Kevin Spacey was interested in playing him," Hickenlooper says. "You know, you're in prison, living in a 175-square-foot room with six other men in prison for narcotics trafficking or whatever.

"He was so vilified in the media that I think he felt he had nothing to lose," continues the director. "And so the first thing he did when I met him was try to persuade me not to make the movie. He said the script's not good, I'm not an interesting subject. He was really trying to charm me."

Spacey, who's also in Toronto for the film's premiere, says he spent six or seven hours with Abramoff. "It was a typical room with fluorescent lighting. I don't know what rooms in prisons normally look like, but it was well-lit," he recalls. "There was a table and a couple of chairs and Mr. Abramoff was in his green prison outfit."

CONTINUED ▶

PHOTO BY TOM WILLIAMS/GETTY

JACK OF ALL TRADES

The real Jack Abramoff leaves Prettyman Federal Courthouse in Washington, D.C., on January 3, 2006, after entering a plea agreement.

Released from prison last year, Abramoff served the final leg of his sentence under home detention, during which he became an employee of Tov Pizza, a kosher pizzeria in Baltimore. He made between $7.50 (U.S.) and $10 per hour.

Until that point, Spacey — who's spent the last eight years balancing movie roles and his responsibilities as artistic director of London's Old Vic Theatre — refused to work on the character. "I decided I would wait until after I met him," he says. "And I was glad I did it that way because I then had a perspective of who I'd met and it wasn't coloured by a great deal of the commentary that, frankly, was just unfair and untrue."

Spacey, who's been into politics since he stuffed envelopes for Jimmy Carter, says his aim was to play Abramoff not as the caricature that had been created in the media, but as a flawed human being who made some bad decisions.

"If you look at the vast majority of material that was written about him he was the devil incarnate, he was the worst human being that ever walked the face of the Earth, and was promptly thrown under the bus," says Spacey. "But then you sort of go well, wait a minute, what did he do, number one, what did he actually do? What was he convicted of?"

What he, and his partner Michael Scanlon, did was convince American Indian tribes to pay about $85-million (U.S.) for their help influencing Washington decision-makers to rule favourably on a casino deal. And what he was convicted of was conspiracy, fraud and tax evasion.

But Spacey believes Abramoff isn't a greedy man in the way, say, Bernie Madoff is. He looks at what Abramoff did with the money, which includes giving much of it away to charity. "He was trying to build this Hebrew school," says Spacey. "So then you go, so was he like the Orthodox Robin Hood in his mind?"

When asked whether he sees Abramoff as a scapegoat, Hickenlooper thinks for a moment then says, "I don't know. I think that's what makes him interesting."

Had they not met with Abramoff, Hickenlooper says the movie wouldn't have been as humorous. "Abramoff is hilarious," he says. "I mean, the guy could have his own TV show. He is really charming, very funny, very charismatic. At one point we're in the warden's office and Spacey is there and he was talking to Jack as Bill Clinton and Jack was talking to Spacey as Reagan. It was hilarious. I wish I'd had a camera. But no cameras in the warden's office."

Jack Abramoff was briefly moved to a halfway house last summer, before serving the rest of his sentence — which ended last month — at home. Considering his toxic status in Washington, perhaps he'll return to producing films. Rumour is, he even met Spacey a few times when he was trying to make it in Hollywood two decades ago. Unlike all those politicians who deny ever meeting Abramoff, Spacey is happy to confirm those rumours.

"Yes. I do believe I met him at several events in the early '90s when he was out there trying to be a producer. I don't really remember details of it," he says, then adds with a laugh, "but then I met a lot of people in the '90s."

Unfortunately, Abramoff has lost his most valuable contact in Hollywood.

At the end of our interview I ask Hickenlooper what he'll do if Abramoff approaches him with a movie idea. He grins and says, "I'm always open if it's a good script. I don't care who's producing it. I've worked with worse scoundrels than Jack Abramoff. Trust me."

Marni Weisz is the editor of Cineplex Magazine.

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WHO IS THE Green Hornet?

He's not the Green Lantern, the Green Arrow or the Green Goblin

The Green Hornet, played by Seth Rogen in this month's movie, is a masked hero who's been around for 75 years, beginning on radio, then moving to film serials, comic books, TV and now a return trip to the big screen.

We break down the masked man's history with our Green Hornet cheat sheet.

- *The Green Hornet*, created by George W. Trendle and Fran Striker, debuts on radio January 31, 1936, and runs until December 5, 1952. Its hero is newspaper publisher Britt Reid, who moonlights as crime-fighting vigilante the Green Hornet. Reid and his trusty Filipino valet Kato are considered outlaws by the police, which means they can move easily in the criminal underworld

- Britt Reid is the great-nephew of John Reid, a.k.a. The Lone Ranger

- His enemies include "Mr. Big" and "Mr. X"

- His modified limousine — "Black Beauty" — is a rolling arsenal of weapons and gadgets

- Reid's signature weapons are a gas gun and the "Hornet's Sting," a power pointer that can stun, shock and open locked doors

- In 1940 and 1941 the Green Hornet comes to the big screen in the form of two movie serials

- Between 1940-1952, three comic book companies — Holyoke, Harvey and Dell — publish their own *Green Hornet* comics

- In 1967, William Dozier, producer of TV's *Batman*, creates *The Green Hornet* TV show as a companion show to *Batman*. The more serious *Green Hornet* is not a hit with viewers, lasting only one season, but it does kick-start newcomer Bruce Lee's (Kato) career. (In Hong Kong, it's called *The Kato Show* due to Lee's huge popularity)

- Also in 1967, Gold Key publishes a comic based on the TV show

- In 2004, director Kevin Smith is to bring *The Green Hornet* to the big screen, but he abandons the project in 2006. In 2010, his script serves as the basis for a new *Green Hornet* comic book

- In 2008, Sony announces Michel Gondry will direct the feature film with Seth Rogen as Reid and Taiwanese actor-singer Jay Chou as Kato —*IR*

OPPOSITE PAGE: Seth Rogen (right) and Jay Chou in this month's *The Green Hornet*. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** *The Green Hornet* film serial; Van Williams and Bruce Lee star as the Green Hornet and Kato on the TV series; a selection of Green Hornet comic book covers; a panel from the Kevin Smith Green Hornet comic

TALKING LIFE AND DEATH WITH JAVIER BARDEM

He has it all — a stellar career, a gorgeous wife, a baby on the way. But that doesn't keep ***Biutiful*** star **Javier Bardem** from thinking about death every single day

BY MATHIEU CHANTELOIS

"How's everything?" a publicist asks Javier Bardem as he enters a hotel suite set aside for interviews during last September's Toronto International Film Festival. "Beautiful," replies the 41-year-old actor.

It's a few hours before the North American premiere of his latest film, *Biutiful*, for which he's already won Best Actor at Cannes.

Biutiful, indeed.

In 2008, Bardem became the first Spaniard to win a Best Supporting Actor Oscar when he did so for playing the emotionless,psychotic hitman in *No Country for Old Men*. The international sex symbol recently married the equally attractive Penélope Cruz (they're expecting their first baby early this year). He has the freedom, and ability, to jump back and forth between pithy dramas, like this film and *Love in the Time of Cholera*, and frothy love stories, like *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* and *Eat Pray Love*.

Plus he has the chance to work with the filmmakers he admires, such as Alejandro González Iñárritu (*21 Grams*, *Babel*), who says he couldn't see himself doing *Biutiful* without Bardem.

Shot in Spanish in Barcelona's underbelly, *Biutiful* stars Bardem as Uxbal, a father of two who's struggling to make a living. Nearly anything goes in his attempt to make a few bucks; supplying cheap Chinese workers to sweatshops and construction sites, selling fake Prada, Louis Vuitton and Chanel on the black market, and doing deals with corrupt policemen. But Uxbal's world changes when he's told his cancer has spread and he has only a couple of months to live. Suddenly, he realizes how little time he has to set things right and protect those he loves before he meets his end.

With a Diet Coke in one hand, and a cigarette in the other, Bardem arrives dressed simply in jeans, a fitted blue shirt and a pair of this season's Prada running shoes (not fakes, we assume).

CONTINUED ▶

BIUTIFUL
HITS THEATRES
JANUARY 14TH

I last interviewed you three years ago, after the North American premiere of *No Country for Old Men*. Since then, so many things have changed in your life.
"Yes. Good things! I'm blessed and lucky. I belong to the three to four percent of actors that have jobs, most are unemployed. To be able to make a living out of this and work on brilliant films is blessed. I always wanted to work with the Coens, and I did. From the very first moment I saw *Amores perros*, I wanted to work with Alejandro, and now I have. I think the payoff for me is patience. Since I started 20 years ago, I have been patient. My mother was an actress and my grandparents were actors, so I knew that this was a marathon. That's difficult in our society because you're taught that you have to succeed fast."

After 20 years, what keeps you going?
"The same thing: I do what I do because I like people. I've studied painting and I was always focused on faces and on body. I like people because through people I can understand myself."

Did your Oscar change your life in any way?
"No. It gave me a good celebration moment. An Oscar means something only if you are able to celebrate with people that you love, otherwise it's meaningless. I had the chance to bring 17 people from home. We had quite a party."

Are you now as comfortable shooting in English as Spanish?
"I'm a lot more comfortable now than I was when I did *Before Night Falls*. When I did *Before Night Falls* I did not speak English, so it was hard. Now I can explain myself and you get more or less the idea. Years ago I would speak to you like Tarzan. When you're working in your own language there is a memory, the body knows how it works. When you're working in a different language, it's difficult to let yourself go, to let yourself flow. I don't know if I would've been able to do this film in English."

***Vicky Cristina Barcelona* and *Biutiful* depict very different Barcelonas. Which is the real one?**
"Both of them. They co-exist together. In Barcelona, Madrid, Rome, London, Berlin, and all over Europe — and I don't know about North America, but it could be the same — many citizens of the world have to deal with that. I know some of the Spanish critics, when they saw the Woody Allen movie said, 'We're not like that.' They're going to say the same thing about this film."

Did you learn anything about fatherhood by making this film?
"No, but I had fun with those kids. They were fun. They were the sweetest. I remember the days when I was at school playing with friends and pretending to be a space warrior, and then it was time to go back to class. There is no transition moment where these kids are saying, 'Hold on a second, we have to study now!' These kids were in and out of that tremendous emotional weight so easily."

Ultimately, this is the story of a man facing death. Did this movie make you reflect on your life and the time you've got left?
"[Long pause.] Isn't this the thing we all think about at least for one second every day? All of us? Don't we all have this moment where we ask ourselves if we are doing the right thing? So, yes, as an actor, when you're faced with a horror like in this film, there is a need to ask yourself what is the place you come back to, where you feel safe and protected. A place where you feel that everything is worth living. The only thing that comes to my mind in those moments are my people, the people that I love. Because if you're able to take care of them, you're able to take care of yourself."

Mathieu Chantelois is the editor of Le magazine Cineplex.

Javier Bardem (left) confers with director Alejandro González Iñárritu on the set of *Biutiful*

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funny girl?

With *Black Swan*, **Natalie Portman**'s most intense film to date, about to carry her through awards season, the serious actor takes a sharp left turn, lightening up for three fun movies in a row ■ BY BOB STRAUSS

Enough with the atonement.

Natalie Portman is ready to have some fun…and maybe cash in.

For years after playing a major role in the disappointing *Star Wars* prequel trilogy — which many saw, but few liked — the Israel-born, Long Island-raised actor who's worked for nearly two-thirds of her 29 years, looked as if she might be doing some kind of professional penance.

She shaved off all her hair for *V for Vendetta*. She made a series of underperforming indies (*Goya's Ghosts*, *My Blueberry Nights*, both the New York and Paris *I Love You* anthologies), and demanding dramas (*Brothers*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*). Plus, after famously avoiding on-screen nudity following the uncomfortable scrutiny of her Lolita-esque performance in 1994's *Leon: The Professional*, Portman finally gave in and did her first nude scenes in the Wes Anderson short *Hotel Chevalier*.

And her most masochistic move yet — torturous training and dropping 20 pounds from her already slight frame to play an unbalanced ballerina in last month's *Black Swan* — has the potential to pay off big this awards season.

During a phone interview while she was shooting *Black Swan*, Portman admitted how vulnerable these roles make her feel. "As an artist, it is scary," she says. "Your work is very, very personal, and you're putting it out there for people to see and to judge. It's a scary thing to do."

Perhaps that's why she decided to lighten up for her 2011 releases.

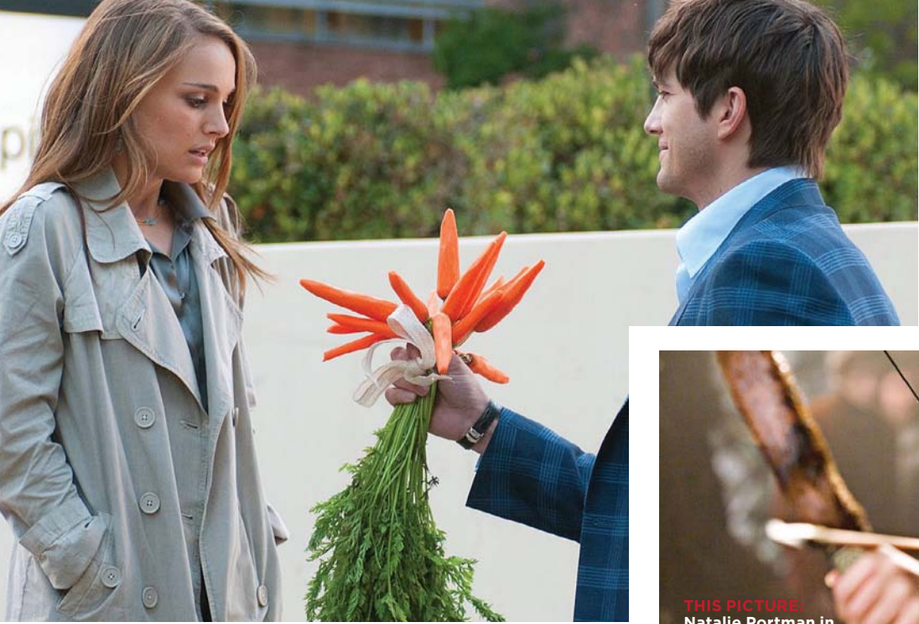
First out is this month's romantic comedy *No Strings Attached*, in which she plays a busy doctor with no time for emotional entanglements. Even hunting for "Mr. Right Now" doesn't fit into her grinding schedule. Her libido is in good, raging health, though, so she turns to her oldest guy friend for some itch scratching.

He is played by the attractive, but eternally lightweight, Ashton Kutcher, and the movie was directed by one of Canada's funniest filmmakers, Ivan Reitman. So even if the scenario leads to obvious complications — drat, those feelings! — making it had to have been more enjoyable than Portman's previous forays into sexual themes, like 2004's *Closer*, a dark drama full of manipulation and pain.

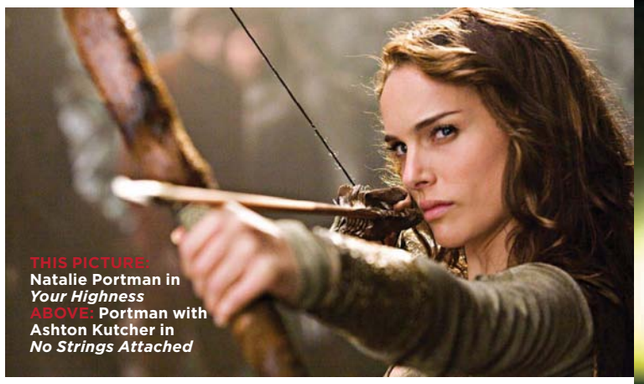
Or maybe not. One actor's malady Portman says she doesn't suffer from is taking the job home with her. "As soon as I finish shooting, I'm back to being me," she explained at a recent press conference. "I want to be myself again. I'm not someone who likes to stay in character."

CONTINUED ▶

PHOTO BY WALTER MCBRIDE/RETNA-CORBIS



NO STRINGS ATTACHED HITS THEATRES JANUARY 21ST



THIS PICTURE: Natalie Portman in *Your Highness* ABOVE: Portman with Ashton Kutcher in *No Strings Attached*

That ability to leave work at the set may also have helped while making her upcoming comedy, *Your Highness*, due out this April. Her love interest in that flick about two very different medieval princes on an epic quest is played by the decidedly un-Kutcherlike comic actor Danny McBride. "I'm a warrior," Portman says. "James Franco plays the brave prince and Danny McBride plays the sort of lazy prince. Danny as my lover in it…it's something to see."

While *No Strings* represents Portman's first flat-out rom-com, *Your Highness*, with its high quotient of Judd Apatow alumni, marks her entry into raunchy comedy. The web is buzzing about the trailer, which features Portman's near-nude backside in a tiny metal thong. She apparently had such a good time making it that she's co-written a screenplay — *Bring Your Own*, which she's shopping around Hollywood — that's described as a kind of *Superbad* from a female point of view. "I loved *Pineapple Express*," she says of her *Your Highness* director's last bawdy comedy. "David Gordon Green is really a fantastic director."

So, too, in his much different way, is British theatre luminary Kenneth Branagh. In May, Portman will be seen in his adaptation of *Thor*, playing the Marvel Comics hero's love interest, Jane Foster. With superheroes superhot at the box-office, *Thor*, which takes liberally from Norse legends, looks like Portman's most commercially calculated work since she signed up with George Lucas. But it was really the project's strangely appropriate choice of director that attracted her.

"It just sounded so weird, Kenneth Branagh directing *Thor*," she says. "So I was like, this is interesting. And it does deal with classic mythology like the comics did. So it made sense in a really interesting way for Ken to bring his Shakespearean background to this big action movie."

That said, comic book movies and goofy comedies may sound frivolous for an actor who could be on the brink of hard-earned Oscar glory. Especially one who seems to be so self-conscious about her screen image. But Portman, who has a degree in psychology from Harvard after all, appears to have a good perspective on her place in the world.

"The great thing is that, as an artist, no one dies if you mess up, unless they're doing some sort of stunts or something," she told me during an interview for the *L.A. Daily News* in 2007. "If we make a movie that doesn't work, the worst thing is you get bad reviews or don't do well at the box office. Which doesn't feel very good, but you leave and you're still healthy and have friends and family. Ultimately, it doesn't change your life. You can get over it."

Which isn't to say Portman doesn't put it all out there, whether the role calls for dancing herself into insanity or just enjoying hook-ups with cute co-stars…or Danny McBride.

"I think it's important to work your hardest and be as kind as possible to everyone that you work with," she said at that *Black Swan* press conference. "I'm not a perfectionist, but that's the goal every day, just keeping focused on that."

And in case you were wondering, Portman does claim to know how to have a good time when she's not working. Sort of.

"I don't have that much time," she admits. "But the good thing is, I do love my work, so my work is fun. And when I get to work in New York, I have dinner with a different friend every night."

Anything else?

"We go to movies."

Bob Strauss lives in L.A. where he writes about movies and filmmakers.

BYO SCRIPT

Natalie Portman and her college friend Laura Moses have been shopping a bawdy script called BYO (or *Bring Your Own*) around Hollywood. So what's it about?

Reports are the story involves two single twentysomething women who throw a party where each female is told to bring an eligible bachelor. Portman hopes to play one of the female leads, and Anne Hathaway's rumoured to be interested in the other role.

But doesn't "Bring Your Own," as in "Bring Your Own Booze," refer to something you're going to consume yourself? We get the feeling there's going to be some bachelor swapping at this do. —*MW*

HOW TO ACT LIKE YOU'RE IN LOVE

Ryan Gosling reveals the extraordinary ways he and Michelle Williams prepared to play a married couple in love, then not in love, for ***Blue Valentine***. Hint: It involves burning stuff

■ BY INGRID RANDOJA

Feel

free to question Ryan Gosling's idea of romance.

The London, Ontario-born actor believes his new film, *Blue Valentine*, is a deeply romantic affair despite the fact that it chronicles the painful unravelling of a marriage.

"Yeah, what the f-ck was he thinking," Gosling says, laughing at his own take on the movie during an interview at last year's Toronto International Film Festival.

Looking relaxed in a neatly pressed dress shirt and jeans, the 30-year-old is quick to point out what he meant is that each of us defines romance differently. "We tried to make an objective portrait of this couple's love story so it can be interpreted as however you want," he says. "It's like that line in the song, 'Baby, baby, where did our love go?' I like that song, and it's a sad sentiment, but it's just a question."

Directed by Derek Cianfrance, the film casts Gosling as Dean, a blue-collar mover who falls for Cindy (Michelle Williams), a nurse who dreams of becoming a doctor. But this isn't a conventional boy-meets-girl tale, rather the film moves back and forth in time, jumping between Dean and Cindy's early, tender moments of courtship to their bitter and destructive falling out.

Gosling is the rare Hollywood actor who isn't afraid to play vulnerable men. He first turned heads for his turn as the Jewish neo-Nazi skinhead in *The Believer*, and he brings the same kind of intensity to playing hurting men in love, as evidenced in both *The Notebook* and *Lars and the Real Girl*.

Blue Valentine asks him to, once again, assert his male sensitivity.

"One of the things Derek told me when we first started talking about the film, he said, 'You know, you're the wife and she's the husband in this movie.' Only in the sense of going against the cliché that all a woman is looking for is a man who loves her, and loves the kid, and comes home at night," the actor explains.

"It's like [Dean] is a person who is full of potential but has no ambition, and makes his purpose in life just being her husband and this little girl's father and doesn't want any more than that. What I like so much about [Michelle's] character is that it is not enough. She's been told that should be enough, and even though that's a romantic idea, she wants someone who has dreams outside of just being with her."

Cianfrance had been trying to make *Blue Valentine* CONTINUED ▶

Blue Valentine's Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams share a tender moment

BLUE VALENTINE HITS THEATRES JANUARY 14TH

for 12 years and Williams, who agreed to star in the film seven years ago, had been thinking about her character for all that time.

Gosling came on board four years ago. For an actor who's known for intense character preparation — he worked and lived as a furniture builder for a month before shooting *The Notebook*, making the movie's kitchen table on which he and co-star Rachel McAdams behave rather naughtily — years of prep time set his creative juices flowing.

"We both worked on these characters for a long time," says Gosling. "Mine for about four years and Michelle for more. We did a lot of different things. Derek had both Michelle and I call him and leave him messages on his phone as the characters, just talk as the character, share experiences that we thought they had growing up."

Cianfrance also had the actors live together in the film's house for a month before shooting. Some days he had them fight, other days he would ask them to be lovey-dovey. They even pretended to share Christmas, complete with wrapped presents.

"Some of that found its way into the movie, but I think all of that work finds its way into the fabric of the film," he says, "you can feel it."

Not every director appreciates that kind of pre-filming intensity. Gosling's quirky behaviour preparing for *The Lovely Bones* — including gaining 60 pounds — irked director Peter Jackson to the point he let Gosling go one day before shooting began (he was replaced by Mark Wahlberg).

But, in truth, what would you expect from an actor who, as a teenager, fought Walt Disney executives for better skits and roles during his stint on the Disney Channel's *Mickey Mouse Club*?

Gosling prides himself on his work ethic, but he also loves when weird and wonderful moments come out of nowhere to enhance his performance. He experienced one of the strangest moments of his career while making *Blue Valentine*, and it involved Dean and Cindy's wedding photo.

"We had such a great time filming the first part of the film, when we were in love," remembers Gosling. "We were just riding high and loving life, and we had to destroy that love for the second half of the film, you know?

"We couldn't do it, we didn't know how, so Derek thought it best if we do a ritual. We took our wedding photograph to the grocery store and bought a load of fireworks. We tied them all to this wedding picture and put it in a big wheelbarrow and doused it in kerosene.

"We set our love on fire," he says. "It went up like the Fourth of July. When it was over, the picture remained but the frame had melted in a heart shape, and everything else had burned except the image of our mouths kissing. It was amazing, like, love lives on."

Still one of Hollywood's most eligible bachelors (he dated Sandra Bullock, and had a very public relationship with Rachel McAdams), could making a movie about a failing marriage dissuade him from tying the knot? "No, it didn't make me feel like, 'No, I don't want to get married or anything like that,'" he says.

"I didn't come to any conclusions, it just raises a lot of questions and I like questions more than answers. I don't feel like I have many answers, which is weird because I get asked questions all the time."

Ingrid Randoja is the deputy editor of Cineplex Magazine.

Ryan Gosling (left) and Zach Shields as Dead Man's Bones

HAUNTING MUSIC

Ryan Gosling brings his uncompromising acting approach to his music career as well. In 2007, Gosling created the two-man band Dead Man's Bones with friend Zach Shields. The pair plays eerie music inspired by a mutual love of ghosts, werewolves and Disneyland's Haunted Mansion ride.

While making their first album, 2009's *Dead Man's Bones*, the duo gave themselves Dogma-like rules, such as recording every song in no more than three takes, playing all the instruments themselves — even if they've never played them before — and including a children's choir in the mix. The result is a strange, but fun, collection of tunes that show off Gosling's strong, haunting voice. —*IR*

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STAR CAUSES

It's tempting to roll your eyes when you hear about some rich celebrity who's tacked their name to another charity, but some celebs have dedicated large chunks of their lives to helping others. If you made a New Year's resolution to give more to charity, or volunteer for a worthy cause, take a look at these six stars, each of whom would love for you to support their favourite cause

BETTY WHITE, ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

What was Betty White doing before her recent resurgence? Working on behalf of animal rights. In fact, she has been one of the most outspoken advocates for animals since the early 1970s, when she hosted and produced a TV show called *The Pet Set*, on which she talked to celebrities about their pets.

In a *Vanity Fair* interview earlier this year, White said her most treasured possession is her golden retriever, her favourite occupation is "being with animals," and if she were to die and come back as any person or thing it would be famed chimpanzee researcher and advocate Jane Goodall.

White has been involved with the Morris Animal Foundation (www.morrisanimalfoundation.org) — which advances the health and welfare of domestic animals and wildlife around the world — since the early 1970s, first as a trustee, then as president in the mid-1980s, and as president emeritus ever since. Her royalties from The Betty White Calendar, which you can find at major retailers, support the foundation.

OTHER CELEBRITIES WHO SUPPORT ANIMAL RIGHTS: Charlize Theron, Jessica Biel, Alicia Silverstone, Bill Maher

WILL FERRELL, CANCER CARE

Will Ferrell saw his college fraternity pal Craig Pollard fight, and survive, cancer. So when Pollard created Cancer For College in 1993 — a charity that provides college scholarships to cancer survivors — Ferrell initially gave money to support the cause. However, as Ferrell's fame grew, so did his involvement.

Ferrell hosts the charity's annual golf tournament; last year's edition raised more than $200,000 (U.S). He auctioned off an extra role in his film *Step Brothers* with proceeds going to the charity (the winning bid came in at $47,100). And, Ferrell acts as a sounding board for Pollard when it comes to making decisions for the organization.

But the actor's most conspicuous support is on display with his line of Will Ferrell Sunscreen products, available on the www.cancerforcollege.org website.

OTHER CELEBRITIES WHO SUPPORT CANCER CARE/RESEARCH: Keanu Reeves, Halle Berry, Gwyneth Paltrow, Alec Baldwin, Katie Couric, Diane Keaton, Cynthia Nixon, Lance Armstrong, Judi Dench, Patricia Arquette

LEONARDO DICAPRIO, ENVIRONMENT

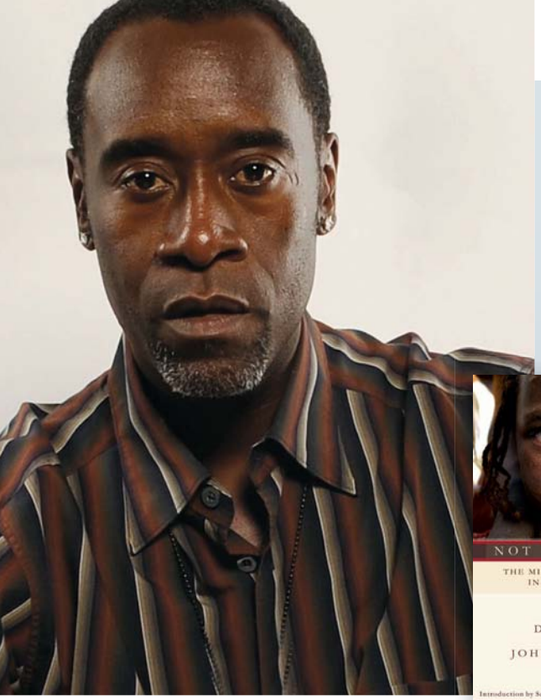
The 36-year-old megastar's concern for the planet began early.

"I think I was a little biologist when I was younger," Leonardo DiCaprio told MoviesOnline. "I watched documentaries on green resource depletion and the loss of species and habitats for animals around the world, and it affected me in a very hardcore emotional way when I was younger."

In 1998, he created the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (www.leonardodicaprio.org), which "supports efforts to secure a sustainable future for our planet and all its inhabitants." That's a tall order Mr. DiCaprio.

To accomplish that, DiCaprio's foundation hooks up with organizations such as the Natural Resource Defense Council and Global Green USA to promote various environmental campaigns. DiCaprio himself produces documentaries (*The 11th Hour*), a TV series (*Eco-Town*), and he funded the construction of Santa Monica's Leonardo DiCaprio e-Activism Computer Zone. And, of course, you won't see him behind the wheel of a Hummer. "I've been driving a hybrid car for five, six years now," says the star.

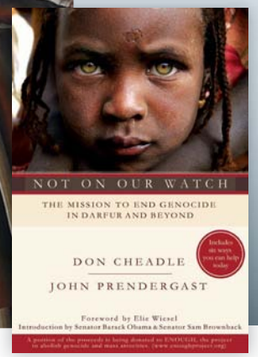
OTHER CELEBRITIES WHO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSES: Harrison Ford, Robert Redford, Barbra Streisand, Ted Danson, Ed Begley Jr., Daryl Hannah, Morgan Freeman, Jeff Goldblum



DON CHEADLE, HUMAN RIGHTS

He may not get as much publicity as fellow Not on Our Watch founders George Clooney, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt, but actor Don Cheadle is the instigating force behind the organization, which has a mission to "focus global attention and resources towards putting an end to mass atrocities around the world."

A year after his powerful performance in 2004's *Hotel Rwanda*, about how the world stood by as the Rwandan genocide unfurled, Cheadle travelled to Darfur with writer and human rights activist John Prendergast. Moved by what they witnessed there the pair co-authored a book called *Not on Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*, which was released in May 2007. Their aim was to inform the public about Darfur and spur people to take practical steps to end that atrocity and similar atrocities worldwide.



Today the organization (notonourwatchproject.org) develops advocacy campaigns that bring a voice not only to those in Darfur, but other afflicted regions, such as Sudan, Burma and Zimbabwe.

OTHER CELEBRITIES WHO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS CHARITIES: George Clooney, Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, Bono, Ben Affleck, Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Orlando Bloom, Ewan McGregor, Sting

ANGELINA JOLIE, REFUGEE AND CHILDREN RIGHTS, DISASTER RELIEF, HIV/AIDS, AND SO ON AND SO ON...

The Grande Dame of celebrity philanthropy, Angelina Jolie seems more comfortable with mud up to her hips in an Afghan refugee camp than on a Hollywood red carpet.

It was her experience making *Tomb Raider* in Cambodia in 2000 that inspired her work with the UN Refugee Agency. She's visited more than 20 countries, donated millions of dollars to a myriad of causes, and that was *before* she hooked up with Brad Pitt in 2006 to create the Jolie-Pitt Foundation, which assists with humanitarian crises around the world.

They use their celebrity as a fundraising weapon — they raised $14-million (U.S.) selling pics of their newborn twins Knox and Vivienne to *People* and *Hello!* magazines — and spend generously themselves (tax records show the pair donated more than $8-million in 2006, and in 2008 they gave $13-million to their own foundation.)

Say what you will about the couple's unconventional lifestyle, but no other celebrities come close to matching their largesse.

EDWARD NORTON, CROWDRISE.COM

Choosing one charity, or two or three or four, wasn't good enough for Edward Norton. Instead, he launched the website www.crowdrise.com to give people the ability to create their own fundraising pages — free of charge — and network with other likeminded philanthropists.

Fundraising comes naturally to Norton, who worked for his grandfather's Enterprise Foundation — a not-for-profit that provides affordable housing to low-income families — as soon as he graduated from high school. (He still serves as a trustee.)

Crowdrise.com tries to make volunteering and raising money fun, riffing off social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. In fact, Norton says it was his experience raising money for the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust through Twitter last year that inspired the idea. "We wanted it to be something with the substance of activism and engagement, but the fun, ease and dynamism of social networking," Norton told Reuters.

OTHER CELEBS WHO'VE SET UP PAGES ON CROWDRISE.COM: Russell Brand (for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace), Seth Rogen (for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association), Paul Rudd (for The Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary Foundation)

ANGELINA JOLIE AND EDWARD NORTON
PHOTOS BY SPLASH NEWS

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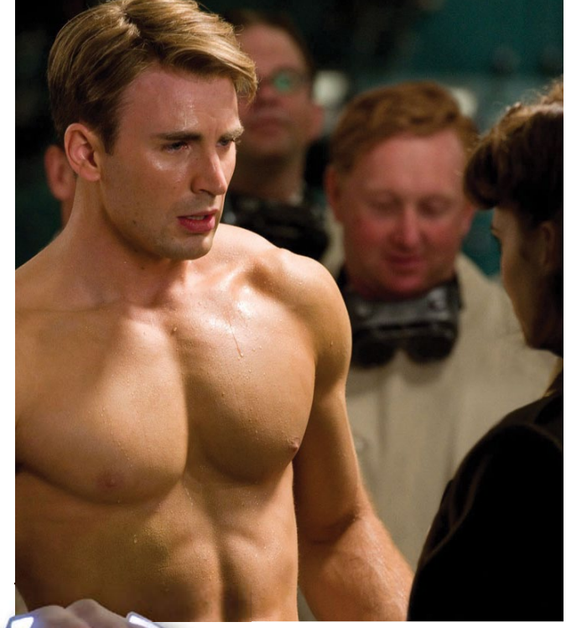
5 That'll Rock

A sneak peek at some of 2011's big flicks

SUCKER PUNCH MARCH 25
It's angry teenage girls gone wild — Zack Snyder style. The director's visual spectacle focuses on five female mental asylum inmates who escape into a fantastical world featuring dragons, samurai and B-52 bombers as a way to help them deal with their real-life horrors.

THOR MAY 6
Aussie actor Chris Hemsworth captures the brawny look of the comic-book hero Thor, and by bringing Shakespearean know-it-all Kenneth Branagh on as director (as well as Oscar-winner Anthony Hopkins to play god Odin), *Thor* becomes the year's most cultured superhero pic.

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS: PART 2 JULY 15
After a long 10 years watching Harry, Ron and Hermione grow up, we must now say our goodbyes. The series finale — shot over 478 days and split into two films — finds our young heroes battling You-Know-Who and his Death Eaters one last time.



THE FIRST AVENGER: CAPTAIN AMERICA JULY 22
Fans of Marvel Comics' beloved hero can't wait to see the new hard-bodied Chris Evans, who bulked up big-time, play Steve Rogers, a sickly young man given a top-secret serum that turns him into studly Captain America, a World War II superhero.

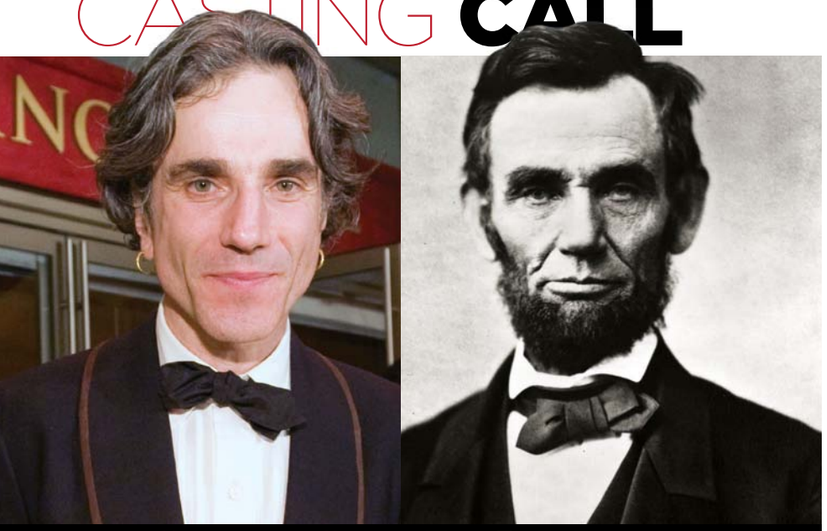
COWBOYS & ALIENS JULY 29
This sci-fi/Western mash-up looks like an awful lot of fun, especially when you've got Daniel Craig strapping on the guns to play a mysterious gunslinger who saves an Old West town from marauding aliens, and Jon Favreau behind the lens.

The Hangover Part II

OTHER MOVIES WE LIKE FOR 2011 (GO LOOK 'EM UP YOURSELF)

WATER FOR ELEPHANTS (APRIL 15), **PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: ON STRANGER TIDES** (MAY 20), **THE HANGOVER PART II** (MAY 26), **THE TREE OF LIFE** (MAY 27), **GREEN LANTERN** (JUNE 17), **RISE OF THE APES** (JUNE 24), **TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON** (JULY 1), **CONTAGION** (OCTOBER 21), **TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN, PART I** (NOVEMBER 18), **HUGO CABRET** (DECEMBER 9), **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - GHOST PROTOCOL** (DECEMBER 16), **THE ADVENTURES OF TIN TIN: SECRET OF THE UNICORN** (DECEMBER 23)

CASTING CALL



HONEST DAN

Steven Spielberg has found his Abraham Lincoln. The director signed **Daniel Day-Lewis** to play America's 16th president in a bio-pic he starts shooting in the fall. **Liam Neeson** was originally attached to the role, but as the project was slow getting off the mark he dropped out, making way for Day-Lewis. The film focuses on Lincoln's fight to end slavery and the raging U.S. Civil War.

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH... *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK*

Set to shoot this year with **Breck Eisner** directing, this long-in-the-works remake of **Kurt Russell**'s 1981 action pic (left) finally came together when **Allan Loeb** penned a script that stayed true to the film's eye-patched hero Snake Plissken. Original *Escape* director **John Carpenter** has a contract that states a remake must refer to the main character as Snake, who must wear an eye-patch, and must "always be a bad-ass." Problem is, they don't have a "bad-ass" actor to play Plissken. Both **Gerard Butler** and **Jeremy Renner** have passed.

RAPACE TRADES DRAGONS FOR ALIENS

Noomi Rapace, the original Lisbeth Salander in the Swedish *Millennium* series, is circling director **Ridley Scott**'s two 3D *Alien* prequels, which are set some 30 years before the first film. Scott will focus on humanity's first encounter with the extraterrestrials, and there's no word exactly who Rapace would play (although it's certainly not Ripley as she hasn't even been born at this point in the *Alien* timeline).

TATUM TAKES TO THE STREET

Channing Tatum steps into **Johnny Depp**'s sneakers to play the youthful cop who goes undercover in a high school in the big screen re-do of TV's *21 Jump Street* (due out in 2012). **Jonah Hill** co-stars as his partner in a movie that'll be part raunchy teen comedy and part cop buddy flick.

MORETZ IN *MIXTAPE*

She shocked us as *Kick-Ass*'s Hit-Girl, now 13-year-old **Chloe Moretz** will tug on our heartstrings in *Mixtape*, playing a misfit teen who gets hold of the song list to a broken mixed tape that belonged to her deceased parents. She sets out to track down every song on the tape in the hopes of getting a better insight into her folks. **Seth Gordon** (*Horrible Bosses*, *Four Christmases*) directs.

FRESH FACE GRETA GERWIG

The 27-year-old actor, director and playwright **Greta Gerwig** stars in this month's *No Strings Attached* as **Natalie Portman**'s pal. You may have first spied her as **Ben Stiller**'s love interest in *Greenberg*. Her everyday beauty and ability to seem like she's not really acting — a skill honed making and starring in low-budget, super-indie movies during her early 20s — hasn't gone unnoticed in Hollywood. Look for Gerwig later this year alongside **Russell Brand** in *Arthur*.

FARRELL LANDS ON MARS

Do we really need a remake of *Total Recall*? Sony Pictures thinks so, and has snagged **Colin Farrell** for the lead originated by **Arnold Schwarzenegger** in the first pic. (Word is Farrell won out over competitors **Tom Hardy** and **Michael Fassbender**.) *Underworld* helmer **Len Wiseman** starts shooting in March and the film will hit screens in 2012.

ALSO IN THE WORKS

▶**Mark Wahlberg** will play hero Nathan Drake in the adaptation of the videogame *Uncharted*. ▶**Malin Akerman** replaces **Lindsay Lohan** as porn star Linda Lovelace in an upcoming bio-pic. ▶*Afterburn* teams **Gerard Butler** with director **Antoine Fuqua** for a post-apocalyptic treasure hunt pic. ▶Look for **Paul Giamatti** in *Hangover 2*.

AT HOME

January's BEST DVD AND BLU-RAY

THE LAST EXORCISM

JANUARY 4

It may sound derivative, but this horror about a skeptical priest (**Patrick Fabian**) asked to help a rural Louisiana girl (**Ashley Bell**) who's suffering from demonic possession turned out to be one of the best scary pics of the year. Perfect for a cold January night under the afghan. Bonus material includes a making-of featurette and, if you dare, "Real Stories of Exorcism."

CATFISH

JANUARY 4

There's been much debate over whether this doc, directed by and starring New York photographer **Nev Schulman**, is the real deal. Schulman develops an online friendship with an eight-year-old girl who creates paintings based on his photos, then he develops an online romance with her older sister.

DINNER FOR SCHMUCKS

JANUARY 4

Paul Rudd is Tim, a nice-enough guy trying to get ahead at work when his not-so-nice boss (**Bruce Greenwood**) invites him to a mean-spirited dinner where employees compete to bring the biggest idiot. Tim brings Barry (**Steve Carell**), an odd, but sweet, guy with a thing for dressing up dead mice.

THE SWITCH

JANUARY 18

Seven years after swapping sperm samples, slightly neurotic stockbroker Wally (**Jason Bateman**) doesn't know how to tell his friend Kassie (**Jennifer Aniston**) that her child, who she thinks was fathered by another man, is actually his. Oh yeah, he also has to tell her that he loves her, and yadda yadda yadda.

MORE MOVIES ▶**MACHETE** (JANUARY 4) ▶**ALPHA AND OMEGA** (JANUARY 11) ▶**JACK GOES BOATING** (JANUARY 18) ▶**TAKERS** (JANUARY 18) ▶**STREETDANCE 3D** (JANUARY 25) ▶**THE GIRL WHO KICKED THE HORNET'S NEST** (JANUARY 25) ▶**NOWHERE BOY** (JANUARY 25)

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Something Special

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JANUARY 4

Director **Robert Rodriguez**, king of low-budget, guerrilla filmmaking, introduces a brand-new feature called "The Cutting Room" with this set of his much-loved Mexico trilogy. Using the provided video clips and music from *El Mariachi*, *Desperado* and *Once Upon a Time in Mexico*, you create your own video, then post it to BD-Live where other fans can watch, and rate, your masterpiece.

Games

Why We Love...

LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

JANUARY 18 (PS3)

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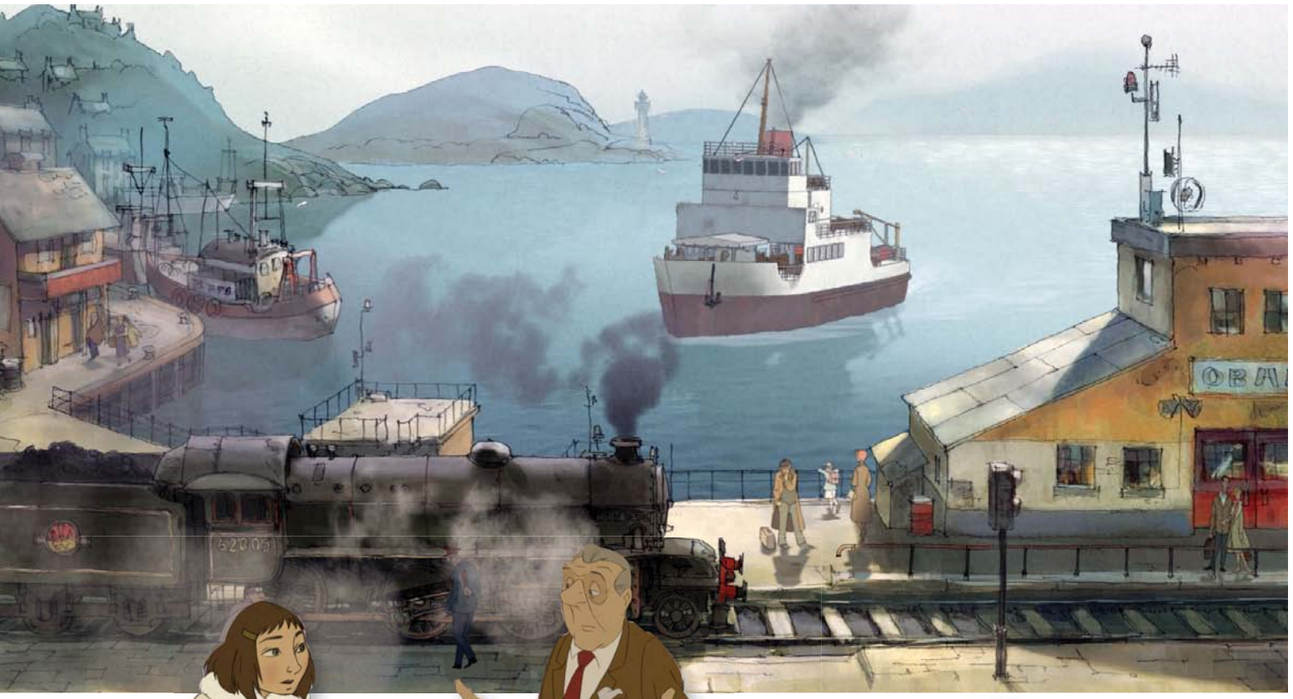

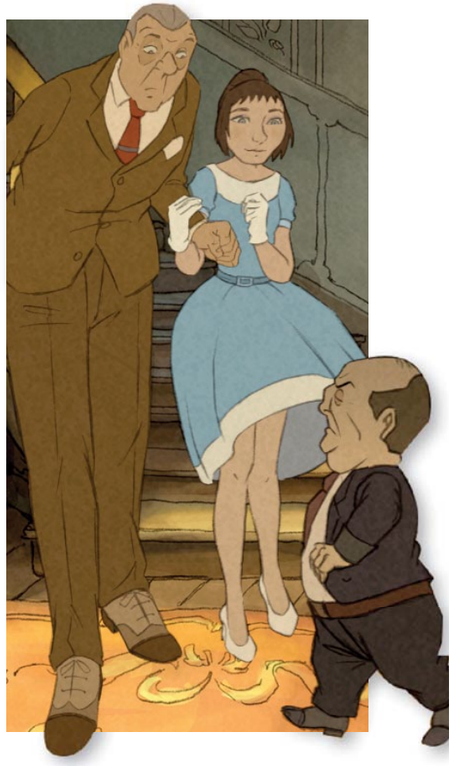

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

From Sylvain Chomet, the French animation genius behind 2003's Oscar-nominated *The Triplets of Belleville*, comes *The Illusionist*, about an aging magician who develops a special friendship with a young girl.

Chomet's old-school style stands in stark contrast to the 3D, computer-generated animation that's today's norm. Which is no accident, says the director. "The strength of 2D in my opinion is it vibrates and it's not perfect, just like reality," says Chomet. "Imperfections are important when you are dealing with a story about human characters. It adds to the realism, makes it even more potent. And 2D is created by humans. CGI is good for robots and toys, less for humans. I want to see the work of an artist on the screen not a machine whose visuals are too neat, shiny and clean."—*MW*

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